

Minutes

The Board of Trustees
Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center
325 Public Street, Providence, RI 02905
Friday, Sept. 23, 2016

DRAFT

Present: Stan Goldstein, Michelle Curreri, Omar Ajaj, Charles Walton, Loren Spears, Herb Cummings

Also Present: Dennis Littky, Lucas Lussier, Nancy Bain, Steve Cohan, Zack Laflash

8:27 Called to order by Stan Goldstein

- Introduction of Board Members to visitors.

Discussion/Vote to Approve Minutes from 5.12.16

- Motion by Charles Walton and seconded by Omar Ajaj to approve May 12, 2016 minutes. All in favor: 6; opposed: 0; abstain: 0

Discussion/Vote to Accept auditor's Report

- Lucas: The Met, defined as a component unit of the state, takes part in an audit process governed by the State Controller.
- The company of O'Connor & Drew have been involved with last 3 Met audits which is helpful because they now understand the Met processes. Representatives Steve Cohan and Zack Laflash will be presenting the results.

REPORT:

- PowerPoint binder, Required Communications, and Financial Communications documents are distributed by Steve Cohan and Zack Laflash.
 - Required Communication document:
 - The audit was performed to make sure basic financial statements are free of issuing unmodified opinion.
 - No noted changes in accounting.
 - Financial Communications document:
 - Pages 4-14 of the audit report is a management results analysis written by Lucas
 - The management discussion analysis was written regarding future operations: The Met has been operating with surpluses in former years. Before the funding formula implementation, RIDE instructed the Met to develop a strategy to create

surplus funding early on to avoid closure. That's when the Met started looking at these outcomes.

- Page 33: the board can state what the intent of those funds shall be used for and in stating intent provides protection for the money that is there to support the surpluses. The intent of the board is that the majority is to be put aside to fund future year operations (except 300k which is put aside to support capital improvement if needed).
- Required Communications
 - BOARD MEETINGS
 - The State requires monthly board meetings; the Met currently holds 4 per year
 - Auditor's recommendation is to meet monthly.
 - The Met does hold smaller sub-committee meetings throughout the year.
 - Dennis asked Lucas to research meeting options including comparisons to other operating boards, working together with a strategic alliance (per Herb), as well as the waiver process which can affect the number of annual required meetings. (Action Item)
 - Page 3 finding: Adjustments had to be made to the Met's books as a result of transferring to new accounting software. The auditors acknowledged that such a transfer always results in glitches and complications that take time to resolve.

At 9:29 AM, Motion by Stan Goldstein and seconded by Charles Walton to convene executive session to discuss the auditor's report. All those in favor: 6; opposed: 0; abstain: 0. Roll Call Vote: all in favor.

9:35 AM Motion to Conclude Executive Session/Reconvene Open Session by Stan Goldstein and seconded by Michelle Curreri to seal minutes taken during executive session. All those in favor: 6; opposed: 0; abstain: 0. Roll Call: All yes.

9:36 AM Motion by Charles Walton and seconded by Omar Ajaj to Accept the Auditor's Report. All those in favor: 6; opposed: 0, abstain: 0. Roll Call: All yes.

Discussion Regarding Status of Budget

- Met school cash and investments
 - Lucas reviewed that at the last meeting a sub committee made up by Omar, Herb and he was named to look at other banking relationships and investment opportunities with the goal to increase yield.

- Omar reported that the state's investment policy's limitations doesn't offer many options; will circle back every month or so; however, no other opportunities are available.
- In response to a question from Stan asking who makes the decisions regarding the investment policy limitations, Lucas answered that the state does, via an investment committee under the treasurer.
- Stan asked if there was any feedback on the state treasurer's opinion on this. Lucas responded with a no and Stan said he would contact the treasurer for clarification and any overriding law(s). (Action Item)
- Lucas has lined up discussions for other banking relations in the near future.
- Budget:
 - (Lucas) One negative: local tuition from sending districts is under budget by \$102,000 . The total unpaid tuition from prior years from 10 districts is \$617,000. The Met has sought legal action and the Commissioner has come forth and asked to have funding brought forth, but the districts have implemented legal action to prevent it. It is the state's rule, that districts pay tuition to receiving schools, and the state has the ability to redirect state aid if a district refuses to comply.
 - Dennis asked Lucas to prepare two paragraphs with the facts of the situation and he will meet with the Commissioner and speak with the Attorney General to inquire about the state's non-action in this situation. (Action Item)
 - (Lucas) On the expense side:
 - METs positive amount will offset deficits that will allow the Met to operate through 2020.

Student Speakers

- Trips outside of the US
 - Normandy France
 - Tokyo Japan
- Summer Youth Programs

Discussion of Committee Work and Expectations

- (Nancy) At the end of last year there came an opportunity to have conversations as a school about our future/new directions and think about where we are as a school. We have created lots of systems over the past 20 years--do those systems work for 2016?
- On the last day of school we had whole-school conversations about making improvements, proposed creating committees and decided what the process would look like.
 - Staff suggested focus areas.

- On the first Professional Development Day of this year, staff got to sign up for committees to flush out problems, research alternatives and identify impacts.
- Administration is an equal working member of each committee.
- Professional Development days are and will be opportunities to slow down and allow these important conversations to take place.
- There will also be an opportunity for groups to meet and continue discussions at staff meetings.
- Some changes or ideas that come out of these conversations could be implemented by Nancy and Dennis, others may need to be brought to the board for discussion before implementation.
- By December the conversations should come to an end and produce proposals for some changes.
 - Dennis: we tried this process 10 years ago, but commitment was difficult to get with all the other time constraints on staff, so Nancy has integrated it into the school plan to facilitate staff participation.

Discussion/updates around Potential New Board members

- Motion by Nancy and seconded by Omar to postpone discussion until the next meeting due to the lateness of this meeting. All those in favor: 6; opposed: 0; abstain: 0. Roll Call: All yes.

Board Update: Policy changes & New Expectations—New Overtime Rules

- Motion by Nancy and seconded by Omar to postpone discussion until the next meeting due to the lateness of this meeting. All those in favor: 6; opposed: 0; abstain: 0. Roll Call: All yes.

Met in the News

- A group in New Orleans has received a multi-million dollar award from the estate of Steve Jobs to create a new Big Picture School on a barge.
- A group in India moves forward with state of the art plans to build a new Big Picture School.

Meeting adjourn 10:15 AM.